

GODLINESS
NO
FRIEND
TO

Rebellion,



OR
ENEMY
TO
CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

Being the Substance of

A SERMON

OCCASIONALLY

Preached at Great Tarmouth, Octob. 25. 1673.

By a Lover of Peace and Truth.

LONDON:

Printed for George Palmer, at the Royal Oak without
Temple-bar. 1674.

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Printed for George P. ... as the Author's Widow

1794



THE
P R E F A C E
T O T H E
R E A D E R.



On these weak and indigested
Notes came to be made pub-
like, is best known to some that
heard them preacht, where-
in their importunities pre-
vailed against the Author's
inclination and judgment, who thinks the
world sufficiently stockt with Prints, and should
not be overburthened in that matter, lest
through the excess of insignificant Papers,
things more weighty and important come to be
nauseated or disregarded. Yet seeing, though

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unworthy, they must come to view, that I may not wrong the Readers privilege, I shall give a short account of the Designe of this Discourse; which as it promotes a great known Duty, incumbent especially upon all the Professors of Religion, so it fairly wipes off all those blots and stains, which either the extravagancies of former times have occasioned, or the bitterness & malice of some in these days cast upon the Profession of Godliness; who, that they might discourage the minds of people from embracing those things and Principles which agree not with their own sentiments or humor, before they well consider or understand the nature or tendencie of them, with great clamour condemn them as intolerable in a Land, and only taken up to promote Rebellion and Faction. I confess, I could heartily wish, with submission to the will of God, that there never had occasion been given to any to speak evil of that which is good: But that hath come to pass by the Providence of God, that there might be a more full conviction of unrighteousness and error, and an ample justification of the Truth, and ways of Godliness; and if there be any so far led away by the
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insincerity of their own hearts, as to abuse the Profession of Holy and Godly Principles and Perswasions, by any inconsistent action or course, that shall speak them trayterous, heady, high-minded, or the like, let such alone hear it, but let all that understand Christian Religion aright, under what form or name soever, Fear God, and honour the King; and say with old Jacob concerning Simeon and Levi, Oh! my Soul, come not thou into their secret, unto their assembly, mine Honour, be not thou unired. Reader, This was the true Reason and Design of the Authors choice of this Subject, that if by any means he might stir up, or reduce the minds of dissenting Professors in this day, to be more sincere and more fervent in praying for the King, and for all that are in Authority, it being a Duty founded not only upon the light of Nature, but also upon the positive will of the Lord Christ; as also to bear his testimony, though in weakness, against the absurd and endless Cavils and accusations which disaffected persons heap upon the most holy ways of God; that he might declare to the world, that Godliness, and Scriptural Holiness in the most refined and highest parts

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parts and practices of it, is a harmless innocent thing, no way inconsistent with Civil Government, but highly advantageous to the good and comfort of mans life. So that men need not look upon, or be afraid of the most strict method of holiness, as injurious, or as a pest to the Nation, because they give no disturbance to any thing but mens lusts and sins, to the pride and excess of the world, to which also Civil Government, according to its native Institution is, and by a regular management of it, should be a terror. And what is the fruit of our cavilling and bandying against each other about circumstantial things wherein we differ, but disunion, weakness, and a laying our selves open to the impressions and designs of the Common Enemy, who doubtless in all the furrows of our mutual animosities, do by their secret Agents sowe the seeds of greater divisions, and the Tares of their detestable Romish Doctrines and Superstition? Certainly, it is high time for every publike Talent to be employed for the more abundant preaching of the word of God, that the minds and understandings of people may be well furnisht with knowledge and Scripture-light, to enable them

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them to judge betwixt Truth and Falshood; which, when all is done, will be of great use to exclude Popery, and secure England against it. For what will it avail by Power to exclude and cast out the trumpery and exercise of that Worship from amongst us, if the minds of people, through their own ignorance, or cunning guile of deceivers, shall be tainted with, and receive their Principles?

Reader, I shall detain thee no longer; do thy self and me that right, to read what follows with that candor and charity, which a hasty Discourse, composed under many disturbances, calls for; it is not what the Subject deserves, but what could be offered within the usual limits of a Sermon. It little differs from what was delivered in publick, save in what was wanting through defect of memory, or want of time. If what is offered shall conduce to the healing of thy spirit, or the helping on of thy duty, the Author hath his designed recompence and reward in thy good, and shall bless God for it.

EZRA



E Z R A 6. 10.

That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto God, and pray for the life of the King, and for the life of his Sons.



IN all the Revolutions and Changes that have passed upon the Affairs of the World, God's Providence hath in nothing more eminently appeared, than in matters relating to his Church and People, in their pilgrimage of this life. An eminent instance whereof, was this of the Jews going into *Babylon*, preservation there, and wonderful return from their Captive condition, to their own Country of *Judea*, and the peculiar Worship of their God in the Temple at *Jerusalem*: which deliverance and liberty, though it was much compleated in the reign of *Darius*, yet it was begun long before by the *Persian Cyrus*; so that it will be needful to look back to his time, that we may the more fully see the rise of this Decree, for the repair of the Temple. For with a narration of *Cyrus* his Decree, *Ezra* begins his Book. *Cyrus* having obtained great Conquests, he led his Army against *Babylon*; and having overcome

Joseph. lib. 11. Of the Antiquities of the Jews.

great difficulties, he sat down before that great City ; which beside the many wonderful fortifications of it, had the River *Euphrates* running through it. *Belsazzar* then King thereof, with his *Babylonians*, scorning their Enemies, supposing their City impregnable, kept a great and solemn Feast in contempt of them, as also of the Jews and their Prophets, who had declared that the time was come for their returning to *Jerusalem* ; and thinking the time was past, in contempt of the God of the Jews, the King caroused and drunk wine in the golden Vessels of the Temple which *Nebuchadnezzar* carried away : but out of reverence to God, had not used or polluted them. At which Feast, the terrible hand-writing upon the wall appeared, as in the 5th of *Daniel*. *Belsazzar*, notwithstanding the faithful remonstrance and interpretation of *Daniel*, goeth on with his luxurious Feast, filling themselves with wine ; when, lo, the wrath of God, according to his word, was ready to fall upon them : For that very night, *Cyrus* having by his Engineers, and the help of his numerous Army, turned the River *Euphrates*, which, as I said, ran through the City, from its usual course ; in the Chancel thereof with his Army entred the City, the people being buried in their wine and drunkenness ; fully executed what was long before prophesied by *Jeremiah*, Chapt. 51. About this time the Prophets *Zechariah* and *Haggai* earnestly stirred up the Princes that were of the Captivity to think of returning, and repairing *Jerusalem* and the Temple. But if the work was hard to be attempted under the impious *Belsazzar*, it seems now impossible under the terrible conquering

quering *Cyrus* : for what lenity could they expect to find in him, that had made such dreadful havock in the City of *Babylon* ? The Prophets to this discouragement opposed two Arguments : One, of God's Sovereignty, as in *Zechariah*, Chapt. 4. ver. 7. *Who art thou, O great Mountain ? (that is, Cyrus) before Zorobabel thou shalt become a plain ; he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, Grace unto it.* The power and spirit of *Cyrus* seemed like a great Mountain in the way of their return, hard, if not impossible to be overcome ; which yet through the Omnipotencie of God should vanish, as to any resistance and impediment to their Journey and work. The other Argument was from the Prophecie of *Isaiab*, Chapt. 44. three last Verses: *That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his Messengers : that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited, and to the Cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof : That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers : That saith of Cyrus, He is my Shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and to the Temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.* What greater encouragement could the people have, than so plain a Prophecie, apparently to be fulfilled about this time ? but their minds, viz. of the Jews, were either enured to their bondage, or disheartned by the inaccessible Majesty of *Cyrus*, so, as they were much discouraged, and could not tell what to do in that cause ; when loe, the Almighty wrought for them ; and him whom they could not force, God made willing and free to their

so much desired liberty. For God brought it to pass, that the King had a sight of the Jews Law, and particularly of the Prophesie of *Isaiah*, Chapt. 44, and 45. (written two hundred and ten years before his time) concerning himself. When he heard it (says *Josephus*) he was so astonished at the Greatness and Majesty of God, and filled with admiration, and zeal to fulfil what was foretold he should perform concerning *Jerusalem* and the Temple, that he wrote Letters to his Princes in all *Asia*; Thus saith Cyrus, Seeing God hath made me King of all the world, I do believe it is he whom the Jews worship: for he hath declared my name by his Prophets, before I was born, and hath said that I shall build his Temple in *Jerusalem*, which is in the Country of *Judea*. Then he made a Decree (as in the first of *Ezra* we have it) for the return of the people of the Jews to their Country: Upon which *Zorobabel*, with many whose spirits God stirred up to the work, returned to *Jerusalem*; yet many others of the people, for their possessions or employments sake, staid behind, and did not go up with the rest of their Brethren. But this excellent *Cyrus* lived not long, but soon after died in the prosecution of his Wars; so as little was done in his time in the work of the Temple. After *Cyrus*, came *Ahasuerus*, or *Artaxerxes*, who little favoured the work, so as their Enemies took encouragement to hinder it what they could: which kept it back all his time, which was about nine years. To him the Officers of the King, and the Jews enemies, accused them, for building a rebellious City, and factious Temple. The King believing the report, decreed against the work, as in the 4th Chapter of *Ezra*, we have at large.

So

So as little was done whilst he lived. He being cut off in the midst of his impiety by an eminent hand of God, *Darius* succeeded, who from a private condition by the consent of the Princes is saluted King of *Persia*. Upon this change, the High Priest adviseth *Zorobabel* to congratulate the Kings promotion, and sollicite for liberty and favour to carry on the Temple-work. *Zorobabel* upon his appearance at Court is admitted to favour, and made one of the Kings Guard; there he was informed of a Vow the King made before he came to the Crown, viz. that if ever he obtained the Majesty and Sovereignty of the Empire, he would cause the Temple at *Jerusalem* to be built, and the remaining Vessels restored, and what should be wanting given to the work. This gave him some encouragement; but how to improve it he knew not; when behold, the wonderful Providence of God, who boweth the Heavens, and is present to order the affairs and spirits of men, for the fulfilling of his counsel and will in all things, made a plain way for him: for *Darius* having royally treated his Princes, that night he could not sleep; and as he lay on his bed, discoursing with his Guard, he gave to three of them, whereof *Zorobabel* was one, three Questions to declaim on the next day, making great promises to him that should be adjudged the best learned. The next day the King calling his Princes together, heard their *Orations*, and all concluded for *Zorobabel*. Then the King required him to ask what he would have. He presently answered, Oh King, all that I ask, is, that you would remember your promise, and make good your Vow made before you came to the
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the Crown, *viz.* that if ever you attained your Dignity, you would rebuild the Temple at *Jerusalem*, and restore the golden Vessels taken away. The King hearing this, embraced him, and kissed him; and besides many Honours conferred on him, gave him ample Letters to his Governours, for the carrying on the work, as in the 6th of *Ezra*, and to furnish them with all things needful for the worship of God; That (as verse the 10th) they may offer Sacrifices of sweet savour unto God, and to pray for *the life of the King, and for the life of his Sons.*

Thus I have given you a glimpse of God's care and Providence over his Church in her wilderness and captive condition: We come now to the words, in which the Phrase must be a little opened.

Sacrifices were of divers kinds; and for its nature, it was *munus fæderale*, as one calls it, a *federal gift*, by which, as the sinner declared his subjection and service to God, so on the other hand God declared his acceptance of, and reconciliation towards the sinner, and that he took him into his peculiar care and protection. Accordingly we find in Scripture, that Sacrifice was used as a Divine Rite of invocation or prayer to God; So 1 *Samuel*, Chapt. 13. ver. 12. says *Saul, Therefore I said, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the Lord; I forced my self, therefore, and offered a burnt-offering.* So *Psalms* 116. *I will take the cup of Salvation, and call on the Name of the Lord.* The cup of Salvation is that drink-offering which was poured upon the Sacrifice, while they were calling on, or praying to the Lord; so that sacrificing was a kind

kind of praying, typically including the ground of prayer and hope : for what ground can there be for prayer, but the Covenant and promise of God ? or of hope to receive from God, but by the pardon of sin ? for how can any man suppose that God should bless him according to his prayers, while he is under guilt and irremission of sin, and God irreconciled unto him ? So that Sacrifice here is a Rite of Invocation and Prayer ; and with us, prayer in the Name of Christ, is the same in effect with what Sacrifices of sweet Odours were to them.

The life of the King ; That is, the preservation of his natural life, the welfare of his Affairs and Government ; and of *his Sons*, viz. the welfare of his Family, the preservation of his Successors.

This shall suffice for the opening of the Phrase ; come we now to the Observations.

Consider the favour of *Darius* as an effect of his Vow, and the Observation will be ;

Obs. That where the fear of God is in the heart of man, or any religious regard toward God, his Vows and Promises of Obedience shall be duly and faithfully kept and performed ; though they are not immediately fulfilled, yet they shall not always be laid by and forgotten. This great *Darius* having made a Vow to restore God's people the Jews to their liberty Civil and Religious, though for some Reasons of State, or the necessity of present affairs so requiring it, or the defect of his memory, he for a short time fulfilled not this generous Vow, yet he owned it, and took thankfully the remembrance of it ; and God so ordering it, made his Princes and Captains see how much

much he was bound in point of honour to God and himself to make good his word.

2. *Obs.* Secondly, Observe, that where the fear of God is, there will be a religious calling upon God, in entrance of any solemn work civil or divine : So *Jacob* when he went to his Uncle *Laban*, sought to God for supply, as his Vow imports; and when he returned, for fear of his Brother *Esaú*, how he wraisted with God ! And *Darius* here, entring as it were upon his great work of Government, seeks to God by his people the Jews for a blessing.

3. *Obs.* Thirdly, Observe, That the clemencie and beneficence of the King, and Governours under him, is a great obligation upon the minds of people to duty and obedience. It is an old Maxime, that *Protectio trahit Allegiantiam*, that Protection doth draw Allegiance ; the more generously any Prince preserveth the due liberty and welfare of the Subjects, the more fully will their minds embrace his Government, and they become duly observant of him. It was fit for the mouth of an Heathen, *Tiberius*, to say, *When I am dead, let the world be mingled with fire* ; Or, of an impious *Caligula*, *Let men hate me, so they fear me*.

'Tis true, severity and roughness seem to become Sovereignty and Greatness ; but the common product & effect of it is, secretly to cast the minds into extreme despair, and consequently to give disturbance and unsettlement to Government. This *Rehoboam* knew to his cost, when for his severity ten Tribes revolted with *Jeroboam* from the house of *David*. Clemencie is the most Orient Pearl in the Crown ; there is no cord draws and binds more firmly and surely than that of
love ;

love: for as *Solomon* hath it, *Prov.* Chapt. 20. ver. 28. *Mercy and Truth preserve the King, and his Throne is established by Mercy.*

But I shall pass these things, and speak to four Truths, of which the Kings mind seemed to be convinced.

I. First, That Kings and Governours that have great things upon their hands, stand in great need of Prayer: If mean men in their private affairs and difficulties of life, which are but of a narrow compass, stand in need of Prayers; how much more Kings, Parliaments, and Inferiour Governours, that have the burden and weight of Government upon their shoulders? Therefore *Darius* with an humble greatness declared his own insufficiencie, either for protection, or right management of the power which God had put into his hand, by his calling for Prayer. As if he had said, Let the world know, and do ye all my people see, that I stand in need of Prayer, that I may obtain the Divine help and assistance of God upon my Throne. But take it particularly.

Reas. 1. They stand in need of Prayer, because it is hard work to Govern well; very hard work where the mind is faithful in the discharge of it; the disquieting thoughts and macerating cares that attend the mind of Governours, how much do they hinder those common contents and ease of this life, that others enjoy? We are all taken with the glistering shew of Royalty, but do not see the thorns that Crowns are lined with; how the King as a civil father should answer the variety of persuasions, interests, dispositions and desires of his people, and keep

all within the bounds of peace. Subjection and Loyalty is no easie thing without God's assistance. 'Tis true, that in a *Halcyon* and prosperous time, Government seems easie and desirable to every one ; but to stand at the Helm in a stormy day, when the blustering contradictions of Affairs make all tremble, when the very *Foundations* are as it were out of course ; it is no easie thing then to secure the welfare of a Kingdom, and reduce its affairs to a state of peace and quietness. This shews how much the King and those in Government want Prayer.

Reas. 2. Secondly, They want Prayer for protection ; for great *Eminencies* have always their great dangers : certainly, there is no sort of men more exposed to danger than they, on whom the weight of Government most lieth ; the Christian Governors who set their faces against sin and wickedness, against Popery and prophaneness. It is hard to manage Rule and Power without prejudicing some Interest, and distasting some sorts of persons, to the raising disaffections and discontents in their minds, which by Romish Principles of Religion will be improved to one mischief or other to the King or Nation. You have heard, and I hope it is remembred with detestation to the impious Principles of the Jesuites, who plotted, and by their Agents endeavoured to introduce the Romish Religion, through the ruine of our Government and Governours, by plotting to blow up with Gun-powder the King, the Prince, the Lords and Commons then assembled in Parliament ; all which they purposed and endeavoured. but God in mercy to this Nation prevented them ; which speaks that

that Kings and Governours do need Prayers for their protection and safety.

Reas. 3. Thirdly, Because their affairs concern more than themselves, and consequently the unhappy issues and events of their failings take hold of more than themselves; yea, the personal failings of those in Government are of a publike import and consequence; as you know when *Saul* slew the *Gibeonites* in his zeal, how God plagued the Nation of the Jews for it: So when *David* numbred the people, God brought a sore Judgment upon the Land for that sin; and for his sin in the matter of *Uriah*, though a personal failing, yet the Lord suffered the unnatural Rebellion of *Absalom* to break out, to the trouble of the whole Land: so that the failings of those that are in Authority, relate to more than themselves, therefore we had need pray that God would be with them in their great Affairs, in which they cannot miscarry, but the Nation at least must feel it, if not mourn deeply under it.

4. Fourthly, Pray that they in Authority may attain the true ends of Government. There is nothing higher and greater among men, than *Humane Sovereignty*, which God hath not set in the world for a vain shew, or given it to men, that they might lord it over their fellow-creatures: But God hath set *Kings and Parliaments*, and every kind of Governour in the world for his own glory, and the good of mankind, to seek and endeavour the prosperity, riches and honour of a Nation; that the true Religion be maintained; that vice and wickedness be discouraged, and vertue and goodness be countenanced; that

Trade be duly cherish'd and encouraged. These and the like are the noble ends of Government, and things worthy the care of Kings and Governours to prosecute and promote: they therefore need Prayer, that they may not come short of the generous and noble ends of their being.

5. Fifthly, They want Prayer, because they have great temptations, much greater than other men meet with: all temptations give a trial to men, much more those that are backt with power. There is no Greatness but hath its Temptation; Riches are a temptation to Luxury, to excesses of conversation; Power and Greatness a Temptation to Pride, to Injustice and Oppression: But besides these and the like, Kings, and those in Authority have the Temptations of their evil Councillours or Flatterers, these make it their business to insinuate and distil upon the mind of the King, either evil Principles, or false reports, to the debauching his understanding, to render him negligent of his duty, or confident in that which is evil. *Saul* had always those about him that traduced and accused *David*, so as to stir up and provoke his rage against him; which gave no small disturbance to himself and the Nation: We had need therefore pray that God would disabuse and free the mind of the King and those in Authority from such entangling and misleading counsels.

Use. For Use: See then the reason of the Apostles exhortation, *1 Tim. 2. 2. Let prayers and supplications with thanksgiving be made for all men, especially for Kings, and those in Authority, that under them we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness*
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and honesty. This is a great duty in order to our well-being as men, and as Christians ; which doth not depend upon the well-doing of Governours, but is founded upon the Sovereign will of God, as in the third verse: *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of Jesus Christ our Lord.* So that this is not a matter left to our liberty and choice, but a duty, the neglect whereof is not only a *deviation* from the Rule which God hath set us to walk by, but an implicate endeavour to throw the Nation into disturbance and disorder : for if Governours be set in the world for the good of mankind, and Prayer bring any advantage or benefit to them, we cannot withhold our Prayers for them, without prejudicing the Nations peace and welfare. Again, pray that ye may help them in their work : For, as we help the King with our money ; so also with our Prayers ; which speaks the wonderful wisdom of God, in making every part of the world a tributary to the whole, by which it consisteth : for as Kings and Governours do help us in point of protection, and the preservation of right to us ; so we do or may help, by our Prayers to God, the King upon the Throne, the Parliament in framing Laws, the Judge in giving Sentence upon the Bench ; therefore pray for them.

2. Observe in the second place, That God *only* can bless and prosper Kings and Rulers of the world. This is a great Truth, of which the mind of our *Darius* in the Text seems to be convinced, that God *only* could make the Sword in his hand powerful and prosperous, victorious and successful: *That they may pray,* &c. as if he had said, Let God be sought ; for it is he only

only that clotheth me with happines. This the Scripture declareth, *Proverbs 8th the 14 and 15 Verse : Counsel is mine, & sound wisdom ; I am understanding, I am strength* (spoken of Christ, in whose hand God hath lodged all power) says he, *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice ; By me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Rulers of the earth.* So that the right and successful swaying the Scepter is of God; yea, the wisdom which capacitates and fits great Ones, for their high and noble Employments, is of God, and so are the beautiful effects of Wisdom his also ; for were the Kings Councillors for wisdom like the Angels of God, yet if God be not in all their Councils, to guide their thoughts, and govern their debates, their issues would soon entangle the Nation. Though Parliaments consist of wise, experienced and faithful men, yet it is of God that they decree Justice and Righteousness. This is the God that guided *David* in all his straits; that ordered his leaving *Jerusalem* (when *Absalom* rebelled) for his preservation : It is he that left *Absalom* to choose the counsel of *Hushai* to his confusion, that he might punish him for his disloyalty and rebellion against the King his Father, and bring upon his head the blood of his brother *Amnon*, whom he slew in his revengeful rage. This is he that draws the Sword of War, and gives it commission to drink blood, so as none can stay it, and make peace ; this is he that puts the Sword up into the scabbard, so as none shall give disturbance ; this is the *Lord of the whole earth*, in whose hands are all the issues and events of affairs and undertakings of men ; so that it is not in the power of men, of King
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and Parliament, of Armies or Navies, to prosper and make happy; they are but instruments at the best, the blessing is from the Lord. The Use of this is,

1. First, Then learn where to leave and lodge the publike affairs of the Nation, even in the hand of the Almighty. There are many things dear and precious to you, and are much upon your heart, as the maintenance of the true Protestant faith, the exclusion of Popery, the encrease of Trade, the preservation of just Rights and Liberties, the upholding the Honour of the Nation abroad, and the like: now who but God can give these to a people? Go then to God by fasting and prayer, humbly in regard of sin; in Faith, considering his promise, believing that God, and he only, can make us an happy people; happy in our King, happy in our Parliament; commit them by faith and prayer to the Grace and assistance of God. Hath God committed Government by his Providence and appointment to them? do you commit them to God: For if God be not with them, they cannot prosper. It was not for nothing that *Moses* was so importunate with God for his presence, saying, *Lord, if thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence*; for without thee we cannot go on in safety. This is a great people, and who can keep us right but thy self? therefore let thy presence go with us. Oh! then, what discontents, jealousies and fears may be that arise in your mind, let them send you to God, drive you to the Throne of Grace. Alas! it is in vain for *Rachel* to be angry and chide with her husband *Jacob* for children; God must open her womb, or she must die in her barrenness. 'Tis true, as there are instruments of blessings,

blessings, so of evils and punishments to a Nation; but our eye should not be so much upon them, as upon God, from whom every good and evil cometh. Thus *David* quieted his spirit in the case of *Shimei's* cursings; and this would not a little conduce to the quietness and peace of a Nation under crosses and evils that come upon us for our sin. The woman with her bloody issue may spend all her substance upon Physicians; but it is God must limit her distemper, it is God alone that can cure her; she must come to Christ, or die in her disease. It is not the high wall of treasure, nor the long Sword of Power, that can deliver or secure a Nation. Then do not make *Kings* or *Parliaments*, forein Alliancyes, Armies, or Navies, your strength; for God many times blasts that we confide most in, that we might learn where to confide and trust: So the Lord called *Israel* to re-mind the disappointment of their leaning upon *Affyria*, *Hos.* 5. ver. 13. *When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to King Jareb, yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.* When God brought them into a streight, they made the Assyrian their *Jareb* or Saviour; by him they reckoned they should save themselves, or subdue their enemies. But, says God, he could not help you, ye are wounded and weak still. When shall we learn to sanctifie God's Sovereignty by an humble and fiducial reliance upon him in all our streights and difficulties, and say as returning *Ephraim*, *Jer.* 3. ver. 23. when God saith, *Return you back-sliding children, and I will heal your back-slidings; Behold, say they, we come to thee, for thou art the Lord our God.*

God. Mark, what follows: Truly, in vain is Salvation looked for from the hills, and from the mountains; Truly, in the Lord our God is the Salvation of Israel. Oh! that we could fiducially say so of England: In the Lord our God is the Salvation of England.

2. The second Use is, That we would pray that God would keep this great Truth upon the heart of our *Sovereign King*, and his Councillors, also upon the heart of the Honourable Trustees of the Nation assembled in Parliament; That God only can bless Governours, and make their work prosperous in their hand. Certainly, the more such a Perswasion taketh hold and prevaieth upon the minds of men, the more they will endeavour to sanctifie the Name of God, either by doing vertuous and worthy actions, or avoiding that which is unrighteous and unjust, knowing, that the Throne is only established in righteousness. Sirs, by a little consideration of affairs in all ages, you may take notice how God hath contested and striven with the world about the Honour of his Name and Sovereignty: this is the main and great Reason of the wonderful and strange Revolutions and Changes of the Affairs, States, Governments and Kingdoms in the world; namely, the Honour of God. He hath left such Prints and Characters of his Majesty and Sovereignty upon the affairs of men, That they may know he is God, and ruleth in the Kingdom of men; and that men, whatever their appearances and blusterings here below are, do make but a vain shew; they cannot stop the Counsel of God, nor the effecting of his will in any thing, who shall certainly do whatever he hath said

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or determined. This Doctrine we have in *Ecclesiastes* the 8th, verse 14. *I know that whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever, nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God doth it, that men should fear before him*: That is, it is not in man to alter any course of Affairs which God hath set; but it shall run in a constant course, like a mighty river that cannot be resisted; thus it shall be for ever: and if God will bless a Nation, and multiply its comforts and prosperity, none shall be able to break the hedge of his Providence, or lessen the heap of blessings which he hath given: or if he will bring a curse and calamity upon a people, it is not in the power of man further than God will use him as an instrument, to add to the affliction, nor can he help and deliver from the trouble, no nor mitigate or lessen it in the least degree, whatever we may think. The reason of all is given, *viz. That men should fear before him*; as if he had said, They will not fear me, but the Creature, if it were able to make any alteration either for good or evil. Thus God would have all men sanctifie his Name, by having such thoughts of him in their minds. And he seems to bespeak the world at this day by his Providence, as he did in the 46th *Psalms*, verse 8, 9, 10. *Come, behold, the works of the Lord, what desolation he hath made in the earth: He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire: Be still, and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the Heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.* What a majesticall Challenge is this of God, bespeaking the whole world in point of his

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Honour. Oh ! pray that God would powerfully insitil this upon the mind of the Great Ones of our earth, that they also may sanctifie his great Name aright.

3. A third Observation or Truth which seemed to be upon the heart of our *Darius* here is, That as God only can bless us, so God will be worshipt of us, and sought to by Prayer for those blessings we stand in need of. 'Tis true, God can bless us without our asking, but he will be sanctified in the way of his dispensations. There is no rational expectance to be had of God's blessings, but in the way which himself hath set and appointed, *viz.* the way of Prayer : the Heathens were much convinced of this, that no good thing could be obtained of their Gods, but by Sacrifice ; which, as we have shewed, was a Rite of Invocation or Prayer ; therefore in all their solemn attempts and motions, still they began with Sacrifice, imploring their Gods to be propitious to their designs, and give success to their noble and high enterprises. And if the light of Nature evidence so much Religion and regard to God, How much more should Christian Religion teach us to seek God in all our undertakings and concernments relating to our private, or the publike affairs of the Nation ? For though God's mind is always inclined through free Grace to do good to mankind, yet for the honour of his Name, it shall be in a way of sanctifying his Ordinances and Appointments ; therefore says the Apostle, *Let your requests be made known to God*; not as if God needed our relation or discovery of our wants to him ; No, he knows our wants before we ask : but

by our asking of God, we declare our dependance upon him, and recognize or acknowledge his Sovereignty over us: nor do our Prayers make a change in the Counsels and purposes of God; but they many times make a change in our minds, when thereby our hearts are wrought to be more humble in patience and submission, more believing in quieting our minds, in resting upon the Promises of God's Grace; for God hath annexed great promises of good to those that call upon him: *Call upon me*, says he, *in the day of trouble, and I will hear you*; for your Nation, for your families, or as we have it in *1 Chronicles 17. 14. If my people which are called by my Name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and return from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.* So that the great and good things which God hath promised, are still with reference to the way of Prayer; therefore *Jeremiah 29. verse 11.* saith the Lord by his Prophet, *For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end; then shall you call upon me, and you shall go and pray to me, and I will hearken to you.* When you would have an end of wars, the way is to go to God by Prayer; for God will be sought to, whatever his thoughts are, that in every thing his Name may be honoured.

Use. Now for Use: This shews the Holiness of Prayer; how much it tends to God's Honour, that his Creatures do in all the affairs of their life, commit and commend themselves to God by Prayer. As also.

also it shews the usefulness of Prayer to us, How great a help it is either to our affairs, or our mind in all our streights: This is the golden Key that unlocks the Treasury of Gods Alsufficiencie, and gives us to see that there are more with us than against us; this is the Bucket that fetches up water of life, in the wilderness of our extremities and necessities, and brings relief and refreshment to the mind of man; when nothing else will quiet his spirit, this will. Oh! then roul all your burdens upon the Lord; the burden of national Affairs, of family affairs, or of your particular concernments, which will answer one end of afflictions; for when God sends a Famine, or Plague, or War, or any other disturbance upon a Nation or People, it is, that we might seek unto God, who stands ready to be entreated by a Reforming people; he waits that he might be gracious to such a people, who observe every Call of God to duty, and rightly interpret every Voice to its proper end and intendment. Of Judgments, to a fervent praying and striving with God to remove them. Of Sin, to humiliation, and beseeching God to divert his impending wrath, and prevent the ruine of the Nation. Of the want of this God complained, *Ezek. 22. ver. 29, 30. The people of the Land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy; yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully; and I sought for a man among them to stand in the gap before me for the Land, but I found none.* See what follows: *Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them, I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath, their own way have I recompensed.*

compens'd upon their head, saith the Lord. So that when the voice of injustice and wickedness cried against Israel, because none was found to plead with God ; Oh ! how ill it went with them ! Sin opens a gap for a flood of wrath to break in upon a people ; and when a Voice of Atheism, Prophaness, and unparallel'd Impieties are heard in our Land, what but a way of Prayer and humiliation can produce any security for the Nation. Oh ! then seek to the Lord that he would purge the Land in Mercy, not in Judgment ; Let not the Lord say, I sought for a man to stand in the gap, and turn away my wrath from *England*, and found none. Think of this you that live without Prayer, in whose Family the Voice of Prayer is not heard. How little do you serve the Publike good of the Nation ? Whom doth God threaten with his fury, but the Families that call'd not on his Name ? How will the men of *Nineveh* rise up in Judgment against such a Generation, who when they heard but the threatnings of wrath, fell to praying and fasting, *Jonah 3. verse 5.* *So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a Fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least.* And in *ver. 8.* *Let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God ; yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the iniquity that is in their hands.* And *verse 9.* *For who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, and we perish not ?* Observe what eminent success they found in the way of God, as *verse 10.* *And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways, and God repented of the evil that he had said*
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he would do to them, and did it not. This, and what else is written, is written for our instruction; and what cause shall we have to be silent forever before the Lord, if after all smitings and admonitions, past or present troubles, we turn not to the Lord, and seek to him for pardon and help, when the Lord shall avenge himself upon us to the full: oh then! let us take that way God hath appointed for deliverance and prosperity.

4. But in the last place, there is another Truth that seemed to be upon the heart of this great *Darius*; and that is,

Doct. That God will be entreated only by his Servants. Says he, *That they may pray for the life of the King.* They, that is, the Servants of the living God, the Children of God, they are most like to do good at Prayer to God for me, for God is entreated only of his Servants. But who are those Servants of whom only God will be entreated?

1. They are opposed to Atheists, who say, There is no God. The Scripture saith, *He that comes to God must believe that God is*; That is essential to Prayer; the contrary cuts off, and destroys the very essence of Prayer: So that not Atheists, but they that believe there is a God, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, shall prevail with God in Prayer.

2. Secondly, The Servants of God are opposed to Idolaters, that worship false Gods: Let every one go to his own God; now he that serves the God of Heaven and earth is most like to prevail with this God. The Priests of *Baal* they cry'd to *Baal*, and the

the Heathens in the ship with *Jonah*, cry to their God ; but *Elijah* or *Jonah* could only prevail with the God of Israel ; and who are most like to prevail with that God, but they that truly worship him ? Otherwise the Prayers of a Heathen, that worship the Sun and Moon, might prevail as much as ours.

3. Thirdly, They are opposed to impious and profane ones. There are a Generation of such in the world, who by their wicked lives confute their Religion, and their Christian name, and Prayers. If a Heathen should hear their words, and see their actions and manner of living, it would make them think either there is no God, or that the God of the Christians is a false God ; of such it is said, *That the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

4. Lastly, They are opposed to Unbelievers ; Christ being the Object of Faith, who is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life* ; through whose Name alone we are welcome to God : As Christ saith, *Whatever ye ask in my Name believingly, it shall be granted to you.* And again, *There is no Name under Heaven whereby we can be saved, but the Name of Jesus Christ only.* So that without Faith in his Name, whereby any one accepts and depends upon Christ as a Saviour and Deliverer, he cannot expect to prevail with God in Prayer ; God will be entreated only of those who have by Faith embraced the Lord Jesus, whom the Gospel by the appointment of God holds forth to be a Saviour to lost sinners : otherwise the Prayers of a Turk would be as acceptabie to God, as the Prayers of a Christian ; Nay, the Prayers of a Jew, who scornfully deny

deny Christ to be come in the flesh, may do as much in Heaven, as the Prayers of one who savingly believes in Christ : No, such shall one day know that there is one, and but one true God, and that Jesus Christ his Son is the appointed way of Salvation, and that they only who truly believe on him, to a receiving the Kingdom of his Spirit and Grace in their hearts, to regeneration and holiness, are those Servants of whom God will be entreated in mercy, either for publike or private blessings. To clear this, I could give you many instances; take only two or three. When God laid a Judgement upon the family of *Abimelech*, saith God to him, Go to *Abraham*, for he is a Prophet, he shall pray for you, him I will hear. And in the last Chapter of *Job*, ver. 38: *Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for your selves a burnt-offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, like my servant Job.* How unexpected was this to these men, that this despised *Job*, whom they endeavored so much to convict of hypocrisie, is only accepted of God, and to him they must go to pray and entreat God for them? So, though *Jeremiah* was a man of sorrows, and much despised of all sorts in his time, yet the time came when *Zedekiah* the King sent his honourable Messengers to *Jeremy*, saying, *Pray now unto the Lord our God for us, as in Jer. 37. verse 3.* So we read in the *Acts* concerning the Jews, however they had despised the *Lord of Life*, as also his Apostles, yet being convinced of their sin and lost condi-

tion by their Ministry and Preaching, they came to those despised Apostles, crying out in bitterness of spirit, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do?* So the Goaler ye read of in the *Acts*, who no doubt helped on the persecution of the Apostles by his rude and course usage; yet when God broke in upon his Soul with a mighty convincing and astonishing power, he came trembling to those very men, whom he had not long before put in the stocks, crying out, *Sirs; What must I do to be saved?* These instances shall suffice to shew us, that God is only entreated by his Servants; and that whose persons are accepted in Christ, their Prayers only are powerful with God. I might give several Reasons for this: But I hasten to the Use.

Use. First, If so, then I beseech you learn to prize holiness and godliness: for though no man is accepted for his holiness, yet no man without holiness shall ever see God, or be accepted of God. Let not your eye be upon what the World magnifies, but upon what God delights in. For that which is in high esteem with men, may be an abomination with God: all the Dignities of this world cannot give you the worth that Godliness will put upon you; this makes a man weigh down a thousand of the Sons of *Belial*. Wicked and prophane wretches are as the dross of the earth, while the Godly Christian is as gold in God's sight; God will only be entreated of such: Oh! then give Godliness its due honour and regard: Let all scoffing *Ishmaels* take heed they be not found guilty and answerable at the great day of Judgment, for abasing and abusing that which God will

will honour, and takes more pleasure in than in any thing besides here below. There are many, too many for the welfare of the Nation, who do not only take pleasure in an impious looseness of Conversation, but in railing and scoffing vent their foolish malice against religiousness, purity, and strictness of life: let such take heed, for in so doing they fight against God, who sets a value upon his Holy Ones, that tremble at his word, and will hear them, when all the earth shall be silent before him.

2. Secondly, Let it invite you all this day that are out of Christ, to come in and accept of him and his ways: this privilege and honor will one day be considerable to you; to which you can never attain, but by espousing Christ, his interest, & ways, by Faith.

3. Thirdly, Then you that have an interest in God, and acceptance through Christ, improve it at the Throne of Grace, for the King and all that are in Authority; who knows what Judgments you may divert, what blessings you may draw down upon the Nation? *Luther* was so great an admirer of Prayer, that he almost called it *Omnipotent*. Prayer is not for a private use only, but for a publick good. As Trading men use their Treasures for advantage and gain to themselves and others, so do you improve your Grace and heavenly Interest, so as the Nation may fare the better for you, by the fervencie and powerfulness of your Prayers for the King, Parliament, and those that have lawful Authority in their hands: let it appear who is your Father, of what Family, and of what spirit ye are; that ye may give a proof to the world of the Divinity of those Principles and Perswa-

sions you adhere to so strictly. Thus God's people in all former times have done: So *Jerhonias* in his Captive State, caused a Collection of money to be made, and sent it to *Jerusalem*, with a Letter, saying, *We have sent you money to buy sacrifices of meat-offerings and drink-offerings, and sweet odours, that ye may offer them upon the Altar that is at Jerusalem, and pray for the life of Nebuchadnezzar, and for the life of Belteshazzar his son, that their days on earth may be as the days of Heaven.* Thus he seemed to approve the Divinity and Innocencie of that Religion they professed, which however it differed from, or contradicted the Babylonish Idolatry, yet was not inconsistent with, but useful to their Civil State and Government. And *Cyprian* being accused of Rebellion, makes this the proof his innocencie, saying, *How can that be? for the world knows that we pray for the King, and the welfare of his Government.* So *Tertullian* in his Apology for the Christians in his time, gives this as a proof that the Christian Religion was a holy and peaceable Religion: for, saith he, in our Prayers we seek God for the life of the *Emperour*, for his prosperous state and reign; that God would give him a quiet house, wise Counsellors, and valiant Souldiers: And how agreeable is this to the Doctrine of the Scriptures mentioned before? A duty not only acceptable to Governours, but also to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Oh! then pray and cry earnestly to God for those that are over us, *That in their peace ye may have peace, and that under them ye may lead a quiet life, in all godliness and honesty.*

4. Use. Fourthly, Then be not offended at reproaches and scorns you meet withal in the ways of God : If God will thus, and otherwise honour his people, do you think that men can dishonour you? Indeed, if things and persons were to be accounted as the world judgeth of them, then the most holy ones and ways are the most vile and abominable ; yea, *the off-scouring of all things* ; but God speaks otherwise of you, and of his ways, to which we ought to attend, and bear our selves upon ; and happy are they who are not offended at the ways of God, whatever they meet with from men ; yea, when they speak all manner of evil against you falsely for Christs sake ; for so have the most eminent Servants of God fared in the world, who yet were of more value with God than thousands of others, for of such only in all times of difficulties God hath been entreated ; yea, God hath, and oft doth bring it about in his Providence, that the world doth own and acknowledge the worth of a godly state, and priviledge of a holy man, and much desires that happiness ; namely, when he inflicts terrors upon a wicked man, either of death, or hell, How doth he then bless the state of the Righteous ! what would he not give to be in the state of a godly and holy man, to be assured of the pardon of his sins, of the everlasting love of God to his Soul ? How doth he condemn and curse his evil life and wicked ways, and call for the Prayer of the righteous, or of those that fear God, that they may prevail with God for him ? as we have in *Job 33. verse 21, 22. His flesh is consumed, his bones that were not seen stick out, his Soul draweth near to the grave, and his life to the destroyers ;*

Destroyers. If there be a messenger with him, an Interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness, then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit. Then, Oh pray! that God would shew mercy to pardon his sin, to save his Soul, to deliver him from eternal torments. Thus many times, when God besets even a wicked man with terrors, and hath him as Balaam betwixt two walls, then his language is, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my later end be like his.* This God doth, that he might raise the price and value of his Children in the world, and honour them even in the eyes of men, who are careless of his Honour and Glory.

5. Lastly, By way of Use, then I beseech you that fear God, that profess strictness of Principles and Perswasions differing in some things from the way of others, that ye will so walk and behave your selves in all holiness of Conversation, that you may evidence to the world the holiness and harmlesness of your differing Imaginations and ways: Consider what is that which hath made every Age so backward to allow any Reformation or change relating to Religious worship, but a secret jealousie that it would tend to innovate or disturb the Peace & Civil Government of the Nation. Certainly Christianity in the highest profession and practice of it, did never truly prejudice the affairs of the world: and if any, in any Age, have under that badge & profession done or acted any thing injurious to Government or Governours, it is not from the tendencie and conduct of Christian Principles, but from the fury and misleading of their own lusts, and car-

carnal Interests. Therefore I beseech you so to walk, as to null and make void the common accusations against holiness, and stop the mouths of unreasonable Enemies and Accusers. To be so gracious in word and action, so righteous, just, humble, patient, self-denying, giving up your selves to the obedience of the Truth, not minding this world so much, as the great Concernments of Eternity ; that you may be accounted a people worthy of your Christian Profession, and of the name of holiness and purity that is upon you ; worthy of your Gospel-liberty, the most desirable blessing of your life ; and worthy to be called on for Prayer and Supplications for the afflicted, for the Nation, yea, for the life of the King, and for the prosperity of the People.

F I N I S.
